

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated July 17, 2006. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

By the above amendment, claims 2, 4 and 15 have been amended to more clearly define the novel features of the present invention, and claim 16 is newly presented. Accordingly, claims 2, 4-6, 15 and 16 are currently pending in the present application. Claims 1, 3 and 12-14 have been withdrawn from further consideration, and claims 7-11 were previously cancelled.

On page 2 of the Office Action, claim 15 is objected to based on a minor informality. Accordingly, the Examiner's suggestion has been incorporated into claim 15, and thus the objection is now clearly obviated.

Next, on pages 3-5 of the Office Action, claims 2, 4-6 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tetsuo et al. (JP Publication No. 09-060682). It is submitted that the present invention, as embodied by the amended claims, now clearly distinguishes over the Tetsuo reference for the following reasons.

Independent claims 2 and 15 each requires a plurality of joint portions including the combination of at least one first joint portion and at least one second joint portion. Claims 2 and 15 have been amended to particularly define the first and second joint portions which generally correspond to the joint portions illustrated in Figs. 3 and 5 of the present application.

Tetsuo discloses a tube assembly including an outer cylinder 12 and a cylindrical grip part 21 fixed on the outer periphery of the outer cylinder by denting the grip part 21 at a plurality of points P. The dented points appear to be similar to the second joint portion recited in each of

independent claims 2 and 15. However, the Tetsuo reference clearly does not include the claimed first joint portion as presently defined in each of independent claims 2 and 15. Due to the combination of the first and second joint portions, the assembly is capable of withstanding both a large peeling force and a large shearing force (see page 16, lines 1-20). This is because the first joint portion, which has a laterally extruded shape, is excellent in peeling resistance, while the second joint portion, which has a cup-like shape, is excellent in shear strength. Accordingly, it is clear that the Tetsuo reference lacks the required combination of the first and second joint portions, and does not include the first joint portion which includes the laterally extruded shape.

In particular, in the first joint portion, the wall of the first tubular body 14, 15 includes a forward surface located forward relative to the drawing direction F. The wall of the second tubular body 3 includes a rearward surface located rearward relative to the drawing direction F. The forward surface includes a portion 23a that is enlarged diametrically relative to the drawing direction F. The rearward surface includes a recessed portion that is enlarged diametrically relative to the drawing direction. The diametrically enlarged portion 23a of the forward surface is extruded into the diametrically enlarged portion of the rearward surface, thus ensuring high peeling resistance.

Clearly, the Tetsuo reference does not disclose each and every limitation of amended independent claims 2 and 15, and therefore the Tetsuo reference cannot anticipate claims 2 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

the first joint portion in amended claims 2 and 15 precludes the dented portions from being read on the claimed first joint portion.


With respect to the rejection of claim 4, the Examiner takes the position that the Tetsuo reference anticipates claim 4 as originally presented. Accordingly, claim 4 has been amended to positively recite a rivet that forms the laterally extruded shape of the first joint portion. New claim 16 also requires a rivet. The dented portions of Tetsuo clearly do not include a rivet. Thus, claims 4 and 16 are clearly allowable over the Tetsuo reference.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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